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November 5, 2007

Delta Vision Draft
Blue Ribbon Task Force – Delta Vision
650 Capitol Mall, 5th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Second Draft – “A Vision for California’s Delta”

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Reclamation District No. 800 (Byron Tract) is located in the western Delta and provides flood protection to the 10,000 people who live and work in the community of Discovery Bay and to the 6,933 acres of actively farmed agricultural lands. Our District has been following the development of the new Delta Vision with great interest. We have reviewed the second staff draft of “A Vision for California’s Delta” and have the following comments.

First, our District strongly supports the Blue Ribbon Task Force’s recognition that “there must be increased recognition, increased status, and increased protection of the Delta as a place, not just a water supply or a species habitat.” (October 17 Draft, p. 11) Those of us who live, work and play in the Delta understand and appreciate its unique characteristics; we are pleased that your Task Force joins in that view.

Second, because our District’s primary function is flood control, we strongly support the Blue Ribbon Task Force’s recognition that the “protection of human life is of supreme importance.” (October 17 Draft, p. 12). We are very concerned, however, that the draft’s support for the preservation of human life is not stated forcefully and made a foundational principle of the new Delta vision. Instead, the proposed draft focuses its attention on creating a “resilient” Delta and on securing the water supply and ecosystem functions of the Delta. The draft does mention public safety (e.g., at page 3 and in Appendix 2), but public safety does not receive the emphasis we believe it deserves.

Third, and related, we are concerned that the discussion of governance systems does not ever discuss the importance of public safety for communities within the Delta. Again, the draft focuses the discussion of governance structures on securing the water supply and ecosystem functions while ignoring the need to protect existing communities from potential flooding.



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To address these concerns, we propose that the following modifications be made to page 3 of the October 17 draft:

Public safety and emergency response capacities must be given the highest priority and adequate resources ~~high priorities~~, to protect both local and statewide interests. Land use and governance considerations will be particularly important in that effort but will not, by themselves, be sufficient. Protecting the Delta from urbanization in areas without adequate flood protection is critical to preserving its unique character and to public safety. Existing communities must be given all necessary tools and resources to ensure the highest level of protection from flooding and such protection must take precedence over other uses of the Delta.

Our District very much appreciates the hard work of the Blue Ribbon Task Force over the past year and your commitment to completing the Delta vision this year. Please feel free to have your staff contact the District's Manager, Jeff Conway, at (925) 634-2351 if there are any questions regarding these comments.

Very truly yours,

David T. Lennon
President
Board of Trustees

cc: Board of Trustees
Senator Tom Torlakson
Assemblyman Guy Houston